

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

5 A remote network based job accounting system and method. The inventive system includes a memory for providing an accounting database; a controller for processing information stored by and retrieved from the database; a network for coupling the machine to the controller; and an interface coupled to the network for providing user input and output. In a specific implementation, the machine is a copy
10 machine equipped with a mechanism for transmitting information to the database via the controller relating to usage of the machine in connection with a predetermined job. In the illustrative embodiment, an authentication database is operationally coupled to the controller. In the best mode, the network is implemented via the Internet. However, the invention is not limited thereto. The inventive system may be
15 implemented in an Intranet environment. In the illustrative embodiment, the user interface is housed within the copy machine. However, the user interface may be implemented separate from the copy machine, i.e., via a land-based or a wireless telephone or a personal computer. The inventive method allows for a user to utilize a
20 print, copy, facsimile, or scanning machine and receive job cost accounting services inexpensively without using dedicated hardware located at the machine.